

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CE) DETERMINATION & DECISION RECORD (OR116-08-33)

**Project Name:** Cove Creek Blowdown Removal

**BLM Office:** Ashland Resource Area, Medford District

**Phone #:** (541) 618-2497

**Location:** Cove Creek drainage – BLM roads 38-2E-34.1, 39-2E-3.1, 39-2E-11.1, 39-2E-10, 39-2E-10.1, 39-2E-3.2 Jackson County, Medford District, Oregon.

### Description of the Proposed Action

The purpose of this project is to capture the economic value of recently downed timber resulting from the 2007-2008 winter wind storms. The project would remove and sell commercial sized trees that have been blown over or had tops blown out due to the windstorm. Some trees have the tops broken off 30-40 feet up the bole. The lower portions of some of these trees could be cut, felled and removed. Trees would be harvested along the roads mentioned above and in several small 'pockets' adjacent to the road. (See map) Approximately 8-9 log truck loads would be removed with this project.

Some trees would be sold for commercial use while others would be felled and left on site for resource protection needs. Some trees are rotten or broken and are not suitable for commercial wood products. These would be left in place to provide coarse wood debris needs.

### Project Design Features

- Large coarse woody debris of 120 lineal feet (16" X 16') per acre will be maintained where practical.
- Slash will be lopped and scattered, as determined by the sale administrator.
- Road surfaces, ditches and culvert catch basins will be cleaned of slash and debris.
- Road use will be discontinued during periods of wet weather. Most of the trees to be removed are accessible from the road. In the areas that can not be reached from the road, designated skid roads will be used.
- Purchaser will be required to meet current state fire regulations.
- Remove only the portion of the tree within the road prism in Riparian Reserves and Spotted Owl Cores.
- Protect known locations of Bureau Special Status Species plants as recommended by BLM's botanist. Protect site for *Carex serratodens* in 39S-02E-11, along road 39-2E-10.1
- Yarding equipment will be cleaned of dirt, mud, and plant parts before entering BLM-managed lands.
- All heavy equipment will be cleaned of dirt and debris when moving from an infested area to one that is currently free of noxious weeds.
- Known populations of Yellow Star Thistle will be chemically treated, prior to the start of the project.
- To avoid spreading noxious weeds, avoid yarding through known noxious weed locations.
- Tree removal shall occur on BLM roads 39-2E-10 and -10.1 first, working from the furthest reaches of the project area portion and moving northwest and north, respectively.
- No Threatened and Endangered Wildlife species are known to occur in the project area. Removing downed trees within 1/4 mile of a nesting northern spotted or great gray owl may require delaying work until after the nesting seasons (nesting season is March 15 to September 30 for spotted owl, and March 1 to 15 July for great gray owls). If no nesting is taking place, restrictions may be modified upon field review by a Resource Area wildlife biologist.

## Plan Conformance Review

The Bureau of Land Management completed internal scoping with BLM resource specialists. The public was not involved in the devolvement of this project proposal. This proposal is consistent with policy directed by the following:

- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan FSEIS, 1994 and ROD, 1994)
- *Final-Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision* (PRMP/EIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995)
- *Record of Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from the Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (ROD, 2007)
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998)* and tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (EIS, 1985)

The proposed action is in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990 (as amended), and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

This proposal is consistent with management direction in the Medford District Resource Management Plan that directs the BLM to “Provide for salvage harvest of timber killed or damaged by events such as wildfire, windstorms, insects, or disease, consistent with management objectives for other resources.” “Provide for the safety of forest users (including removing hazard trees along roads and trails, in camp grounds, and administrative sites, etc.)” (USDI 1995, p. 72).

## Categorical Exclusion Determination

This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as provided in United States Department of the Interior Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9 I(1). This section allows “Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition as a result of the event. Such activities shall be limited to: repair and installation of essential erosion control structures; replacement of repair of existing culverts, roads, trails, fences, and minor facilities; construction of protection fences; planting, seeding, and mulching; and removal of hazard trees, rocks, soil, and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails, campgrounds, and watercourses.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following table. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Edward Reilly  
Prepared by

Environmental Coordinator  
Title

6/11/2008  
Date

### **Categorical Exclusion Review**

To implement the removal and use of hazardous trees and blow down timber, as described in the Proposed Action. Department of the Interior Manual 516 2.3.A(3) provides for a review of the following criteria for categorical exclusion to determine if exceptions apply to the proposed action based on actions which may:

<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>	<b><u>Categorical Exclusion Exception</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. (40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

**Decision**

It is my decision to implement the Cove Creek Blowdown Removal project as described in the proposed action.

**Decision Rationale**

The proposed action has been reviewed by Ashland Resource Area staff and appropriate Project Design Features, as specified above, will be incorporated into the proposal. Based on the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Categorical Exclusion Review, I have determined the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

**Signature of Authorizing Official**

John Gerritsma  
Field Manager  
Ashland Resource Area

6-11-08  
Date

For

**Contact Person**

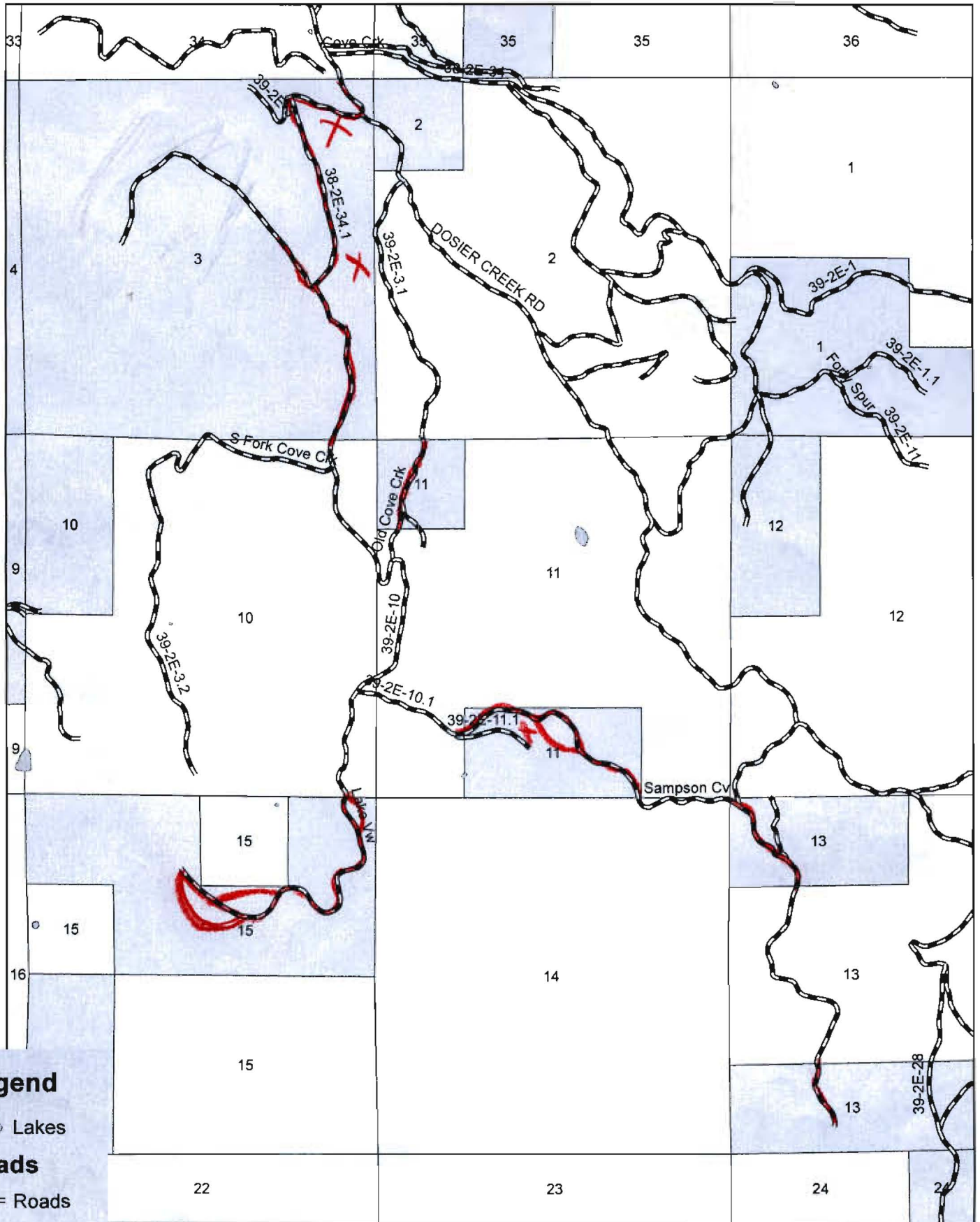
For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact: Ed Reilly at (541) 618-2497.

**Administrative Remedy**

The forest management decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion is subject to protest under 43 CFR subpart 5003. Under 43 CFR 5003.3 subsection (a), protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the notification date of a decision. The date this Decision Record is published on BLM's Website serves as the effective date of this decision. Under 43 CFR 5003.3 (b), protest filed with the authorized officer shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision. A decision on this protest would be subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, although, under 43 CFR 5003.1 subsection (a), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of a decision governing or relating to forest management under 43 CFR 5003.2 or 5003.3.

R 2E

# Cove Blowdown



## Legend

Lakes

## Roads

Roads

Trails

Sections

BLM

X - snags

O - off road

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

1 inch equals 2,000 feet

road side  
blowdown

